



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

Council Session

Item F-1

**#9675 - Consideration of Amendment to Chapter 24, Article II,
Section 24-8 of the Grand Island City Code Related to Swimming
in City Lakes**

Staff Contact: Todd McCoy, Parks & Recreation Director

Council Agenda Memo

From: Todd McCoy, Parks and Recreation Director

Meeting: February 13, 2018

Subject: Approve City Code Amendment to Allow Swimming in City Lakes for Approved Special Events

Presenter(s): Todd McCoy, Parks and Recreation Director

Background

For more than thirty years supervised swimming was offered at L.E. Ray Lake. In 1993 supervised swimming was eliminated and the area was designated as “swim at your own risk.” During that 12 year period a number of drownings occurred and in 2005 all swimming was restricted at L.E. Ray Lake with the exception of scuba training.

Discussion

Recently the Grand Island Sports Council requested that City Code be modified so that swimming may be allowed in order to host a Triathlon event at L.E. Ray Lake.

The Parks and Recreation Department is not in favor of totally reversing the swimming restriction; however, feels that the original intent to the restriction was to forbid unsupervised recreational swimming.

Staff recommends modifying Chapter 24 of City Code to allow swimming specifically for approved special events only.

Alternatives

It appears that the Council has the following alternatives concerning the issue at hand. The Council may:

1. Move to approve
2. Refer the issue to a Committee
3. Postpone the issue to future date
4. Take no action on the issue

Recommendation

City Administration recommends that City Council approve an amendment to City Code to allow swimming specifically for approved special events in City lakes.

Sample Motion

Move to approve amending Chapter 24 of the City Code to allow swimming specifically for approved special events in City lakes.

January 18, 2018

Mr. Todd McCoy, Director
Parks and Recreation
City of Grand Island
100 E. First St.
Grand Island, NE 68801

Re: Request to amend City Ordinance

Dear Mr. McCoy,

On behalf of the Grand Island Area Sports Council, I would like to request that Chapter 24, Article II, Paragraph 8, Sub-paragraph 1 of the Grand Island City Code be amended to permit swimming in L.E. Ray Lake under special conditions to be established by the City.

The Grand Island Area Sports Council is an organization that exists to explore, solicit, create, and sponsor sports events in the Grand Island area. The organization has assisted in bringing such events as State high school volleyball and golf championships, the State Fair Marathon, State cheer and dance championships, the Bill Marshall Volleyball Classic at the State Fair, the Stuhr Museum Firecracker Fun Run, the Crane Trust Buffalo Stampede Gran Fondo, and others to Grand Island. As part of its continuing effort to bring first class sports events to Grand Island, the Sports Council is creating a Tri-City Triathlon, with the inaugural event proposed to be run in Grand Island on June 9, 2018. It is the intent of the Council to run this event annually, each summer, and grow the event into one of the premier triathlons in the Midwest, attracting athletes and supporters from across the country.

One of the necessary components of the triathlon is the swimming portion of the race. The Tri-City Triathlon will be a super-sprint event that will require athletes to swim 400 meters, bike 7 kilometers, and run 2.5 kilometers. The only bodies of water adequate to facilitate the swim portion of the race would be the City lakes. L.E. Ray Lake would be the ideal place to hold the swimming portion of the triathlon. Exhibit A shows the proposed triathlon course, starting at L.E. Ray Park, proceeding south along Blaine St. to Wildwood Dr., west on Wildwood Dr. to Juergen Rd., north on Juergen Rd. to Schimmer Dr., then east on Schimmer Dr. to the entrance of Hall County Park. There will be no need for road closures for the bike portion of the triathlon. However, there will be course marshals charged with stopping traffic at street intersections when bike riders are approaching the intersection. The 2.5 kilometer run will go around the perimeter of and end in Hall County Park.

Exhibit B reflects the bike ride portion of the triathlon in greater detail, while Exhibit C does the same for the run portion of the race. Exhibit D shows the swim course that we are proposing to take place at L.E. Ray Lake. The course is quadrangular in shape, marked by anchored buoys

around which the participants will swim. The exhibit reflects, in yellow, the approximate location of eight (8) course marshals who will be positioned on floating craft to observe the swimmers. Each of these marshals will be excellent swimmers whose responsibility it will be to keep track of the participants and assist any who might appear to be struggling. Race officials will account for the number of swimmers entering and leaving the lake. A blanket insurance policy for the event will be obtained by the Sports Council, naming the City of Grand Island as additionally insured.

We appreciate the City of Grand Island considering our request and look forward to answering any questions necessary to aid the City in granting our request for an amendment to the Code.

Sincerely,



Randy Blair, Executive Director
Grand Island Area Sports Council

cc: File

ORDINANCE NO. 9675

An ordinance to amend Grand Island City Code Chapter 24, Article II, Section 24-8 pertaining to swimming in City Lakes; to repeal any ordinance or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith; and to provide for publication and the effective date of this ordinance.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA:

SECTION 1. Chapter 24, Article II, Section 24-8 of the Grand Island City Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

§24-8. Swimming In City Lakes

(1) It shall be unlawful for any person to swim at any hour in Pier Park Lake, L.E. Ray Lake, Eagle Scout Park Lake, or any other body of water owned and maintained by the City, except that swimming shall be allowed in the municipal pools.

(2) Scuba diving shall be allowed at L.E. Ray Lake in accordance with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission regulations.

(3) The Parks and Recreation Director shall cause all lakes and bodies of water wherein swimming is prohibited to be posted. Such posting shall not be mandatory for enforcement of this section if such person has actual or constructive notice of this prohibition.

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of §24-8(1) through (3), swimming at City lakes may be permitted for special events when approved by the Mayor and Parks Director under conditions and limitations as they may require.

Approved as to Form	☐ _____
February 7, 2018	☐ City Attorney

ORDINANCE NO. 9675 (Cont.)

Amended by Ordinance No. 8971, effective April 27, 2005
Amended by Ordinance No. , effective -----, 2018.

SECTION 2. Any ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith be, and hereby are, repealed.

SECTION 3. This ordinance shall be in force and take effect from and after its passage and publication as provided by law.

Enacted: February 13, 2018.

Jeremy L. Jensen, Mayor

Attest:

RaNae Edwards, City Clerk